



Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2023

Time: 7:00-8:30p

Location: Virtual

- Join Zoom Meeting: <https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/82036592803>
- Meeting ID: 820 3659 2803
- Passcode: 535408

Attendees: Stewart Ikeda, Christine Noah, Nicole Cuff, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Beth Locke

Absent: Brian McMurray, Tom Formicola, Sarah Morgan-Wu

Guests: Katie Luczai, Greta Mastro

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm.

Agenda

1. For Approval: [January Minutes](#) 7:00p-7:05p
 - The minutes passed unanimously without changes. Sarah Morgan-Wu gave her proxy vote in the affirmative. Beth Locke abstained.
2. **Minutes & Secretary** 7:05p-7:10p
 - Christine is taking minutes until we have a Secretary.
3. **DPCD & Chair Updates** 7:10p-7:30p
 - Stewart shared some updates from the Marketing Committee.
 - Reminder that Terry is sending out another newsletter on Monday, so please get her any updates by tomorrow.
 - **Intern Vera Dao** from Tufts Film & Media Studies worked over Winter Break at ACMI on “community bulletin board” projects for 250 and [ACAC](#).
 - **Cultural District:** New brochures are now available that include the High School District on the map. New signs are on order and a new audio chapter is needed.
 - **DPCD updates:** Stewart, Christine, and Katie met with **Claire Ricker** last month and have set up a monthly cadence to check in moving forward. Her office is aligned with

support of ACAC and some of our long-term goals, including mural expansion and artist live/work space.

- If there's anything you'd like us to discuss with Claire, please let Stewart or Christine know.
- Lidia saw her recently and spoke to Claire about a possible sculpture.
- There will be a co-organized bikeway event with Munroe Center for the Arts with four stops in Arlington. If ACAC is interested in partnering on any part of that event, we can contact Katie to learn more.
- Town Warrant articles closed recently, including an article to remove the public art option to avoid the fee for empty storefronts.
- The grant application to put a mural on the MBTA station has been submitted, so we'll see if we get funding for that.
- The Lafayette Trail program places markers along General Lafayette's farewell tour. He made a stop in Arlington. The program covers the cost of markers so we would just need to solidify the exact location.
- Katie is organizing a business community-wide event in April and ACAC is welcome to table at that event.
- The [Annual Report](#) has been submitted – thank you to everyone who helped pull that together.
- We've received an application for a new commissioner and volunteers as well, so Stewart and Christine will be following up with next steps and will keep everyone posted.
- Thanks to Nicole Cuff and Sarah Morgan-Wu for supporting the **Lunar New Year** celebration, netting many new subscribers!

4. **Grants Committee update** 7:30p-7:40p

- Brian couldn't make it to the meeting but he sent an update. The Grants Committee has sent out acceptances for 24 projects this year. They also have one committee member resign, so if anyone is interested or knows someone who might be, please reach out to Brian.

5. **Discussion: Finance Committee preparation** 7:40-8:00p

- There's been some discussion regarding the Grants Committee around the number of applications and money requested – this year was significantly more than the capacity of the budget the Committee receives from MCC. There is interest and appetite to support more of these artists and we have tossed around ideas as to how to raise or generate funds for this in the future. One idea is to ask for additional budget from the Town in our next Finance Committee meeting.
- When the Commission was formed into one umbrella organization across all the artistic work in Town, we made a request for an unusually high budget for a Town committee with the idea that the website would be built and generate income. It was intended as a short-term investment in infrastructure, and was not intended to be long-term funding. The earned income via the website did not come to fruition.
- Over the last 4-5 years, the climate towards the arts has gotten friendlier. There has been great appreciation for the way that ACAC is bringing additional funding into the

Town via MCC and other sources. However, we've not been encouraged to go beyond the \$30-35k allocation we've been getting over the last few years. Structurally, this is a challenging time in the calendar for the Town's finances. But it's a good question to ask long-term.

- Cristin suggested the co-chairs have a conversation with Annie LaCourt (Finance Committee member who has given us guidance in the past). She can give us context on how this ask fits into the larger financial picture and how it might be received.
- There is general agreement on the worthiness of the ask, but there is still only one pot of money.
- Beth noted that the Commission has made very good use of the money we've been given and we've always had a strong story to tell. She wouldn't necessarily encourage being more aggressive on the ask.
- If there was a major project coming up that required the funds and there was a good reason to ask for them, an ask might be appropriate.
- What we do at ACAC is part of an economic development strategy and we're good at it. Would they view individual grants to arts in the same way?
- This speaks to the strategic planning process we'll be undergoing soon – what should we be allocating our money towards? More original programming or more infrastructure to support other artists.
- Is there a separate budget outside of us that is funding arts programming for 250? Yes, but it's really focused on the historical reenactment and public safety around that. They will be relying on other Town departments and committees to flesh out additional support. This could be a strong argument for asking for an increase this year.
- The Finance Committee recommends budgets, not the Town Manager.
- When we were restored to our pre-pandemic level last year, the unspoken message was to not ask for an additional increase.
- Individual projects and artists will likely be more compelling for individual donors than overall ACAC funding, so we should try to focus on that for our future fundraising campaigns.
- Katie noted that they are in the early stages of the Master Planning process and arts and culture will be a part of that. If anyone would like to join the Master Plan Update Committee, we'd be more than welcome – let Katie know.
- Katie will send us information about a potential grant around "Telling Massachusetts Stories." We can determine if we want to apply for 250. Stewart and Christine will look into it.

6. **Community Engagement Updates**

8:00-8:20p

- The committee discussed 250 at their last meeting. Stewart had started a brainstorming document [here](#)
 - It was a vibrant discussion. A few people who hadn't been to a meeting before (or hadn't been for a while) came to discuss this. Making the meeting so specific to a topic turned out a different group of people. Laurie had done some 1:1 outreach to people who had attended interest meetings in the past, which yielded some engagement.

- We will look back at the notes and assign out some follow up on a number of topics and try to find pathways for the different ideas that people brought.
- Beth feels like there needs to be a connector between ACAC/CE and the 250 Committee to ensure these ideas are being shared and that everyone who wants to be involved knows how to get involved. This may be a structural decision making problem, but most people are focused on the reenactment and they are not as concerned about other pieces.
- ACAC is the de facto body for 250 arts and culture events in Town, so we need to manage this initiative and find a way to keep the broader 250 project in the loop. We can help bring people and orgs together to make these projects happen. We should try to get on the agenda for a future 250 Committee meeting.

7. **New Business** 8:20-8:30p

- **Fridays at TRG:** They will be discontinuing the program because it has proven to be a losing proposition for TRG. They do have a beer pop-up which has been successful. They also have a new artist up in the gallery there.
- **Youth Banners:** Cecily and Stewart had a great meeting with Leo from AHS. He was excited about our ideas for student engagement, including Greta's role as commissioner. He has stayed in touch with Gracie James' family and he is interested in doing Youth Banners again this year – not in Town Center but around the high school. Cecily, Stewart, and Sarah are joining a panel of judges for this year's banners, in partnership with the high school; there were 105 entries this year!

Next meeting will be Thursday, March 6, 2024 from 7:00-8:30p (hybrid)



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS 02476

781 - 316 - 3090

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Finance Committee

From: Claire Ricker – Director, Department of Planning and Community Development
Katie Luczai – Economic Development Coordinator

Date: February 15, 2024

RE: Support of Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture

The Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture is one of the greatest entirely volunteer run assets that Arlington has to offer. ACAC is an important driver of Arlington's cultural economy. They offer many diverse arts and culture opportunities, including their active involvement in the community events run by the Arlington Heights Community Association, their public art installations throughout Arlington and their live events programming in public spaces and local businesses. They are a vital part of the local economy. Through their annual, highly competitive grants program they curate strategic investments in arts and culture activities happening right in Arlington. They are a decidedly collaborative organization who values diverse perspectives and raising historically underrepresented voices.

The team leading ACAC is a strong, effective group of residents who are persistently mindful of their mission, strategic vision, community needs and fiscal limitations. We are continually impressed by their organization, focus, and productivity. ACAC maximizes the utmost utility of their town given budget and matched fundraising efforts. It is a guarantee that every dollar spent with ACAC is a dollar directly reinvested into the community.

As we enter FY2025 ACAC will be an essential part of Arlington's Semiquincentennial. In many ways ACAC acts as Arlington 250's arts and culture branch, compared to other communities who have robust subcommittees as a part of their Semiquincentennial efforts. Arlington 250 will be heavily relying on the work of ACAC to offer cultural programming and initiatives around the 250th and their theme of the Untold Stories of Menotomy.

The impact that ACAC has on Arlington locally is felt through the appreciation of the many businesses who work with ACAC. The Department of Planning and Community Development wholeheartedly supports the work of the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture.

Thank you.

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| FY25 Budget : ACAC Summary | | | |
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| PREVIOUSLY RAISED FUNDS | | FY25 Budget | |
| | Unrestricted uses | \$15,000 | |
| | Mural Project | \$18,000 | |
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| | TOTAL PREVIOUSLY RAISED FUNDS | \$33,000 | |
| REVENUE | | FY25 Budget | |
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| | Town of Arlington Allocation | \$35,000 | |
| | Individual Donations | \$5,000 | |
| | Business Donations | \$7,500 | |
| | Grants | \$50,000 | |
| | | | |
| | TOTAL REVENUE | \$97,500 | |
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| | TOTAL REVENUE AND PREV. RAISED FUNDS | \$130,500 | |
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| EXPENSES | | FY25 Budget | |
| Programs | Programming | | |
| | Annual Programs: Live Arts, Plein Air Painting at Town Day, Poet Laureate, Town Wide Painting Projects, etc. | \$12,500 | |
| | Grants Committee Projects | \$21,300 | |
| | Mural Celebrations and Support | \$1,000 | |
| | Mural Project | \$18,000 | |
| | Public Art Curation | \$20,000 | |
| | Rev 250 Special Programming | \$30,000 | |
| | Total Programs | \$102,800 | |
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| Website | Total Website | \$3,000 | |
| Marketing | Consultant | \$9,600 | |
| | Advertising | \$6,000 | |
| | Marketing | \$4,400 | |
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| | Total Marketing | \$20,000 | |
| | | | |
| Fundraising | Total Fundraising | \$1,200 | |
| | | | |
| | TOTAL EXPENSES | \$127,000 | |
| | TOTAL PREV RAISED FUNDS & BUDGETED REV | \$130,500 | |